

REMARKS

The Examiner has grouped the pending claims into two groups:

1. Group I of claims 26-40, drawn to a method; and
2. Group II of claims 41-50, drawn to an apparatus.

In support of the restriction, the Examiner contends that Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept because the claims lack a corresponding special technical feature in light of WO 98/14333 and GB P05965 A. Applicants respectfully traverse the restriction requirement.

Regarding independent claim 26, the cited references do not disclose,

placing the contents sheet and cover sheet in separate guide planes before folding, said guide planes lying one above the other at a distance from one another in the vicinity of a folding device and in a parallel orientation to each other

Similarly, regarding independent claim 41, the cited references also do not disclose,

two guide planes lying one above the other at a distance from one another and in a parallel orientation to each other, the two guide planes being provided in the vicinity of the folding device for separate placement of the contents sheet and cover sheet in a guide plane, respectively;

These limitations constitute corresponding special technical features defining a contribution that the claims make over the prior art.

In WO 98/14333, sheets 4 are not separately placed in the vicinity of the folding device, but outside of the folding device at a conveyor. Cover 1 is not placed in a guide plane, but at rollers 11. Further, sheets 4 are fed in such a way that they push cover 1 down through a guiding slot 5. (See WO 98/14333 at 3, lines 5-12.) During this pushing, the folding and joining are also carried out. Sheet 4 comes between conveyors 14, 15, changes the direction and folds the cover during joining with the cover.

Generally, WO 98/14333 discloses a method and device for affixing sheets in a cover. During the feeding of the cover, a crease in the material forms and an adhesive material is applied parallel to the crease. The content sheets are supplied perpendicular to the movement direction of the cover. There are forming of packs of sheets 4 and the feeding of this pack or of one sheet 4 outside of the folding/joining device (sheet 4 is only a part of it). This requires time.

The claimed invention reduces production time by lying the guide planes one above the other at a distance from one another being provided in the vicinity of the folding device. According to the invention, the final product (the folded and joined contents and cover sheets) is prepared inside the folding/joining device. The sheets can directly be fed in the guide planes. By contrast, WO 98/14333 requires making a pack of sheets 4 outside the folding device, providing the pack or successive one sheet 4 on a conveyor outside the folding device, changing the direction of sheet 4, and giving the cover sheet on a conveyor outside the folding device. Each of these requirements extends production time.

Further, GB P05965 A does not disclose the claim limitations in question. GB P05965 A does not disclose guide planes. Cover D on table E is not guided. Sheet pack A is fixed between walls F and G in a vertical position to the plan cover D. To contact the glued back of cover D, the sheet pack drops freely without being guided. The cover D is only lying on a table E with a passage.

Generally, GB P05965 A discloses a method for pamphlet covering. The only figure of GB P05965 A shows that contents sheets A are fed to cover D. During feeding, contents sheets A are guided between vertical walls F and G, perpendicular to cover D. Then sheets of sheet pack A freely drop (page 1, line 38) on the glued back. With the aid of rollers H and J, the sheet pack is moved downward with the cover D folded thereon. This is the initialization for a plate W to achieve an upright position and join the back with the sheets. (See GB P05965 A at 2, lines 27-30.) Later, plate W gives a passage in table E free so that the folded cover with the sheet pack inside can go through the opening to a press.

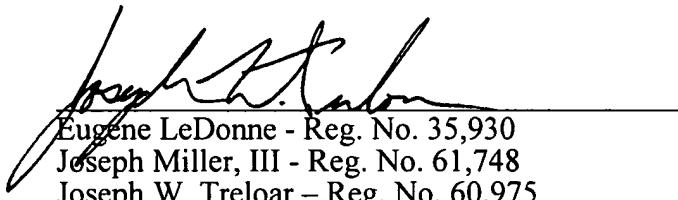
For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims have special technical features defining a contribution that the claims make over the prior art, and

therefore Groups I and II relate to a single general inventive concept pursuant to PCT Rule 13.2. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the restriction requirement.

In view of the Examiner's requirement to select a group for further prosecution should the opposition to restriction not prevail, applicants elect Group II, claims 41-50, for further prosecution in this case.

An early action on the merits of these claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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